Focusing on the 'g' in gPDCA to boost your problem solving skills

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How do we solve problems?
# gPDCA/9 Step Problem Solving Method

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What is a problem?

A gap between what is currently happening... ...and what should be happening.
Introductions

• Name
• Role

• Aspect of problem solving you’d like to explore more deeply
The Situation

Team

Promise: 25 Days
The Situation

It took well over a month!
The Situation

We’re explaining instead of processing.

We’re getting incomplete forms.
1. **IDENTIFY** a Problem in Simple Terms

- Briefly describe the issue and why it matters
- Identify how you will measure the problem
1. Identify a Problem in Simple Terms

Process & Product
1. Identify a Problem in Simple Terms

- Safety
- Quality
- Time
- Cost
- Customer Satisfaction
- Employee Engagement
Practice

1. Identify a Problem in Simple Terms

A. Customers are not happy with our process.

B. Customers are not filling out forms correctly, so the team has to get more information.

C. Customers say it takes too long to have their requests approved. This delays their work.
2. Observe & Measure Current State

• Create a picture of what’s actually happening

• Capture data and facts
2. Observe & Measure Current State

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<th>What do I know?</th>
<th>How do I know that?</th>
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<td>• Customer expectations</td>
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What more do I need to know? How will I find out those things?
2. Observe & Measure Current State
2. Observe & Measure Current State

Telephone Interruptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tues</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thurs</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wrong number</td>
<td>⬤⬤⬤</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>⬤⬤⬤</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Info request</td>
<td></td>
<td>⬤⬤</td>
<td>⬤⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>⬤</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss</td>
<td>⬤⬤⬤</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>⬤⬤⬤</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Observe & Measure Current State

Ask a few, focused questions
2. Observe & Measure Current State

Requirements

- Look
- Ask
2. Observe & Measure Current State

What do we need to know?

How will we find out?

• The process
• Current & past performance
• Customer expectations
• Requirements
Customer Request Process Flow

40% received incomplete

Wait: 2 - 4 days
Touch: 2 - 10 m
Cycle: < 15 m

Wait: 3 - 8 days
Touch: 30 - 60 m
Cycle: < 12 days

Wait: 1 day
Touch: 10 m
Cycle: < 2 days

Process Time: 6 – 44 days
Time to Process Requests (1 Qtr)

Number of Requests

- Complete: 65
- Incomplete: 49

Number of Days to Process

- 15 or less: 13
- 16-20: 8
- 21-25: 7
- 26-30: 15
- 31-35: 23
- 36-40: 23
- 41-45: 23

Approval took longer
Customer Feedback

We’re confused about what’s wrong with our request.

We want approval in 15 days.
Requirements

45 Days vs. 25 Days

- **WAC** *(WA Admin. Code)*
- What we’ve said for years...started with a previous supervisor
3. Set a Target

• Describe what *should be happening* and by when

• In setting a target, consider:
  - ✓ Customer expectations & demand
  - ✓ Requirements
  - ✓ Actual performance
Practice

3. Set a Target

A. By the end of next quarter, process all customer requests within 15 days.

B. Decrease processing time by 50% by the end of next quarter.

C. Process customer requests 50% faster by implementing a new request system.
4. Write a Problem Statement

Describe the measurable gap and when it will be closed
Problem Statement Formula

Currently . . .

*(what’s happening now)*

Compared to our target of . . .

*(what should be happening)*

Which we want to reach by . . .

*(date)*
Currently, we take up to 45 days to process all requests, compared to our target of 15 days, which we want to reach by the end of next quarter.
5. Analyze the Gap

- Identify actionable root cause(s) of the gap
- Propose effective countermeasures to eliminate the cause(s)
5. Analyze the Gap

A. Why is it taking so long to process customer requests?

B. Why can’t we process requests in 15 days?

C. Why do some requests take 45 days instead of 15?
5. Analyze the Gap

Why do some requests take 45 days instead of 15?
Why do some requests take 45 days instead of 15?

We have to contact customers to get additional information

Because

Customers leave out required information in Part 1

Why?

Because

Customers are confused by the new label “ORG”

Why?

Because

The text in the request form differs from the text in the instruction packet

Why?

Because

We changed the label text on the form, but not in the instruction packet

Why?

Because

There is no prompt to update the instruction packet when we change the form
5. **Analyze the Gap**

The text in the request form differs from the text in the instruction packet.

There is no prompt to update the instruction packet when we change the form.

**Align the text**

Create prompt
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Key Points

1. Steps build on each other.
2. Resist the urge to skip steps.
3. Taking the time to grasp the situation will pay off immensely.
4. Let curiosity be your guide.
5. Find simple, cheap ways to observe and measure.
Questions & Answers

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